The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team

Box Elder High School
380 South 600 West
Brigham City, Utah 84302

April 23-24, 2003

Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Box Elder High School
380 South 600 West
Brigham City, Utah 84302

April 23-24, 2003

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, April 23-24, 2003, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Box Elder High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Darrell Eddington is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Box Elder High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Box Elder High School.

Steven O. Laing, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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Secretary

Board of Regents Appointments

12/20/2002

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BOX ELDER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BOX ELDER HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Darrell Eddington...Principal
Jeanne Andersen .... Assistant Principal
Dee Pace... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Darin Nielsen ....Counselor
Dave Smith..Counselor
Martha Vick ....Counselor
Annette Whitaker...Counselor
Paulette Valentine ....School to Careers Counselor

Support Staff

Teri Basinger...Registrar
Trudie Checketts .... Attendance Secretary
Jane Gomez.. Administrative Secretary
Ilene Noorda.. Comprehensive Guidance Clerk
Julie Rupp .... Receptionist/Secretary
Lee Ann Saunders.. Counseling Secretary
Marlene Spendlove .... Financial Secretary
Irlanda Stevens.. Assistant Principal's Secretary
Chad Bouwhuis..Natatorium Aide
Raymond Bunderson...Natatorium Aide
Karen Eddington ....Cheer Advisor
Tony Ferderber...Police Officer
Ken Witt..District Printer

Aides

Peggy Astle	Perry Chambers	Christi Huff
Sherry Auger	Lee Elkington	Joy Jones
Tami Bingham	Shelby Freeze	Tom Miggin
Jeralynn Bishop	Melanie Holmgren	Debbie Nelson

Anita Olsen	Lynda Paxton	Connie Ricks
Janna Olsen	Carolyn Petersen	

Cooks

Darene Black	Tresa Hunsaker	Kristy Schneider
Pam Crosbie	Cally Nebeker	Bobbi Ward
Lynn Greenhalgh	Donnell Nelson	Alice Wells

Custodial Staff

Kevin Andrews	Gary Gardner	Steve May
Mary Ellen Beutler	LaVar Hanson	Minnie Nieto
Colette Bradford	Opal Jenks	Gary Young
Augie Escobar	Sietse Kroeger	
Johnny Forsgren	Bruce Lyon	

Faculty

Joseph Batzel	James Fuller	Sharon Petersen
Cathy Berrett	Katie Geldmacher	Kim Peterson
Caludia Bigler	Peter Gerlach	Randall Rasmussen
Jason Bingham	Gerald Harrison	Durward Ream
Natalie Bingham	Steve Hershfeldt	Mike Reeder
Seth Bingham	Glori Holmgren	Mike Ripplinger
Sherilyn Bouwhuis	JoAnne Hunt	Craig Robinette
Linda Brown	Gardner Jeppsen	Michael Robinson
Pat Burke	Gene Juber	Wes Roesler
Lee Burningham	Chris Larson	Shawn Roundy
Lori Butler	Steve Leggett	Emma Smith
Robert Cefalo	Marlo Mazeroski	Janet Stolworthy
Ron Cefalo	Laurie McCarty	Stephanie Weeks
Charleen Crawford	Laura McKee	Delos Wiberg
Nolin Crook	Keith Mecham	Grover Wilhelmson
Barbara Dallon	RaDene Morgan	Alison Williams
LeGrande Davies	Steve Morgan	Annette Williams
Marilyn Dayton	Michelle Mund	Melanie Williams
Marko DeMonja	Judy Nielsen	Wayne Workman
Lori Dooley	Neldon Nielsen	David Yates
Jeffery Fairbourn	Jill Packer	
Carolyn Fletcher	Martha Perea	

BOX ELDER HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Box Elder High School is to maximize student learning through quality teachers and effective instruction in a constructive environment.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Quality Teachers—We believe that recruiting and retaining outstanding educators will advance the school's vision of student learning by the following:
- Certified and teaching in own field, and using State Curriculum guidelines
- Enthusiastic, caring, and positive with professional accountability
- Collaboration within/between departments and correlation in K-12
- Rewards for instructional research, modification, and collaboration, with opportunities for professional development and life-long learning
- Trained an using a variety of teaching methods, writing across the curriculum (6 traits), and progressive technology
- Mentor teachers, team-teaching opportunities, and time to observe other teachers
- Supportive of departments and activities

Effective Instruction—We believe that providing diverse instruction and balanced curriculum with a variety of assessment will aid student learning by:
- Improving student writing proficiency through a variety of methods
- Improving student reading skills
- Using a variety of teaching techniques that incorporate principles of technology
- Recognizing various needs of diverse learners
- Presenting diverse perspectives and educational experiences
- Showing enthusiasm, humor, and passion in teaching, enabling students to excel
- Emphasizing and utilizing real-life application of material
- Encompassing character, ethical, and value education
- Utilizing a variety of methods of assessment that provide timely feedback, enabling students and teachers to adjust learning and teaching techniques
- Establishing student responsibility for his/her learning, decisions, and actions

Learning Environment—We believe that positive environments, both physical and emotional, will be conducive to student learning by creating:

Physical Environment:
- Clean, orderly, comfortable (temperature), progressive, and well maintained
- Necessary tools, technology, and equipment—up-to-date and properly maintained
- Students and staff appropriately dressed

- Class size appropriate for subject matter
- School pride, encouraging respect and responsibility for facilities

Emotional Environment:
- Free from intimidation and harassment
- Collaboration and support among teachers
- Positive, friendly, and respectful
- Clearly defined behavioral expectations, consistently enforced
- Encouraging innovation
- Instilling school pride through mission, purpose, and vision at Box Elder High School

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Douglas Finch, Lone Peak High School, Alpine School District,
    Visiting Team Chairperson

Robin Bowden, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis School District

Debbie Lamoreaux, Uintah High School, Uintah School District

Rebecca Bennion, Highland High School, Salt Lake City School District

Larry Larson, North Cache Center, Cache School District

Barry Jones, South Ogden Junior High School, Weber School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

BOX ELDER HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The profile of Box Elder High School was a study of the school's role in the community and of programs offered by the school, and included a wide range of data. Located in the community of Brigham City, Box Elder High School serves 1,377 students from eight different municipalities. Sixty regular and five special education teachers, averaging 15.6 years of experience, teach in nine departments. Originally founded in 1894, Box Elder High has a strong heritage of community involvement and pride in student achievement.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Box Elder students' scores on State Core exams exceeded the state averages on every grade level and in every subject, with the exception of Language Arts. Language Arts averages indicate that many of Box Elder's students are struggling with basic reading and English concepts.

Low scores in prewriting, composing, editing, thinking, and reading (SAT) prompted the schoolwide action plans regarding reading and writing across the curriculum.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Box Elder High made considerable effort to gather baseline data regarding the suggested "Potential Sources of Data/Evidence" outlined in USOE training materials, yet failed to demonstrate significant disaggregation, reflection, or analysis. Further, it was apparent from interviews that the school profile was organized in the final stages of preparation for the visit and was not a consideration of departments, focus groups, or school leadership in assessing a current reality.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- The Visiting Team recommends the school continue to collect meaningful data, especially in the areas of perceived strengths and areas of improvement, and thoughtfully analyze the data in another departmental and organizational effectiveness study.

- Box Elder High still has not been able to identify which students are and are not learning. Effective disaggregation of the school's profile data could illuminate further areas of strength and potential improvement.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

During the 2001-02 school year, NSSE surveys were completed by four different parts of the school community: Community, Parents, Faculty, and Students. Better than 58 percent of the community and 90 percent of the other groups completed and returned these surveys. However, interviews with members of the support staff revealed that they were not surveyed.

Box Elder High included administration, faculty, and support staff in the focus group work. Only one parent and one student are listed as participants. Interviews of focus group members revealed that work schedule conflicts, uncertainty of the role of the focus groups, and oversight contributed to the limited involvement by anyone other than school faculty and staff.

In Fall of 2002, the newly elected Box Elder High School Community Council worked to approve and give input on the schoolwide DRSLs and action plans. The community group members further commented that they were utilized as a sounding board during the school's development of its self-study.

b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The school is emerging in the collection and utilization of student performance data, and lacked any documented analysis of profile data provided in the report. Strengths and limitations are generally based on "gut-level" perceptions and limited evidence about current strengths and limitations. For instance, recently gathered data does not support the action plan on reading. A recent assessment of tenth grade reading skills revealed that a small minority of the students is reading below grade level. While these identified individuals need assistance, there is a general feeling of distrust of the data and of not wanting to "strategically abandon" this goal as a schoolwide need.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Box Elder High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. **Life Long Learning**
   - Students make a commitment to creating quality work and striving for excellence
   - Students use a variety of learning strategies, personal skills, and time management skills to enhance learning
   - Students reflect on and evaluate their learning for the purpose of improvement
   - Students take responsibility for their learning, decisions, and actions

2. **Expanding and Integrating Knowledge**
   - Students connect knowledge and experience from different subject areas
   - Students use what they already know to acquire new knowledge, develop new skills, and expand understanding
   - Students demonstrate integrated knowledge and skills in applying multidisciplinary approaches to solving problems and completing tasks

3. **Communication Skills**
   - Students communicate with clarity, purpose, and understanding of audience
   - Students integrate the use of a variety of communication forms and a wide range of communication skills
   - Students recognize, analyze, and evaluate various forms of communication

3. **Thinking and Reasoning Skills**
   - Critical Thinking—Students gather and use information effectively to gain new information and knowledge, classify and organize information, support inferences, and justify conclusions appropriate to the context and audience
   - Problem Solving—Students utilize, evaluate, and refine the use of multiple strategies to solve a variety of problems
   - Creative Thinking—Students generate new and creative ideas by taking risks in a variety of contexts

4. **Interpersonal Skills**
   - Students work with others in a variety of situations to set and achieve goals
   - Students manage and evaluate their behavior as group members
   - Students deal with disagreement and conflict caused by diversity of opinions and beliefs

5. **Personal and Social Responsibility**
   - Students take responsibility for personal actions and act ethically (e.g., demonstrate honesty, fairness, integrity)
   - Students respect themselves and others, and understand and appreciate the diversity and interdependence of everyone

- Students demonstrate an understanding of and responsibility for global and environmental issues
- Students act as responsible citizens in the community, state, and nation

6. **Employability**
   - Plan for a career
   - Function effectively within a system

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

A consensus-building process involving administrators and teachers is evident in Box Elder High's mission and belief statements. Teachers report a sense of collaboration and reflection in the process and demonstrate ownership and pride in these statements. Parents were also involved in the process through the Community Council.

b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The school's mission statement describes the purpose and direction for the school. It reflects the expectations and responsibility of administrators and teachers in addressing the needs of students. The school's belief statements address key issues pertinent to decision making and policy development.

c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

Discussion with various stakeholders showed limited understanding of the definition and the role of DRSLs in the accreditation process. As was expressed by stakeholders several times, Box Elder High is at an initial point of discussion in this stage of the process.

It is recommended that staff and stakeholders revisit the DRSLs in order to (1) increase understanding and levels of commitment, (2) refine the DRSLs so that they reflect the school's vision for student learning, and (3) define measurable goals to monitor student achievement of the DRSLs.

It is suggested that, in writing up the DRSLs, the school should be specific, look for means of measurement, create relevant goals that students can achieve, and make sure that data can be tracked.

Curriculum Development:

a)   *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure that the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

Within the individual departments, it is apparent that most of the staff is working to align curricula with the State Core. Some collaboration between departments has taken place to integrate Core concepts. The departments that have begun to collaborate are those where the individual teachers value a natural connection between curriculum topics. The English and Social Studies Departments, as well as the Physical Education and Health classes, are reported to be leading the school in the area of integrated curricula. The Visiting Team suggests that the staff continue to allocate time and energy to develop methods for integrating Core concepts across content areas and grade levels.

The curriculum at Box Elder High School is based on clearly defined standards that reflect worthwhile expectations for student learning. Essential knowledge and skills are identified and given priority in the development of the curriculum. Information gained through conversations with students, parents, and faculty members suggests that the faculty should continue to investigate research-based pedagogy that will increase their capacity to meet the needs of students on both the high and low ends of academic achievement. Further analysis of disaggregated data drawn from the data contained in the School Profile will help identify which students are learning and which populations of students are not learning. Continued change of focus from teaching to learning should be given priority.

b)   *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Although it is evident that schoolwide conversations have taken place concerning the accreditation process, clear academic focus cannot be articulated by all faculty members. Time constraints and the location of some classrooms are barriers that seem to impede this process. Restructure of the departments into a smaller number of learning communities has the potential to increase dialogue across related curricular areas. The beginning stages of a schoolwide focus (i.e., reading/writing) are emerging, and need to be further developed with measurable benchmarks. Increasing schoolwide understanding of criteria for selecting the DRSLs will enable the school community to have a clear focus on curriculum and instruction.

The Visiting Team would highly recommend that the staff individually and collectively research ways to implement the DRSLs in their respective curricula, to measure and to celebrate the attainment of benchmark DRSL goals.

Quality Instructional Design:

a)   *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of*
        learning experiences that actively engage students?

        It is evident at Box Elder High School that the professional staff individually
        (and, in one observed case, collectively), designs and demonstrates a wide variety
        of effective instructional strategies that not only actively engage students but also
        address a variety of student learning styles. While observing classes throughout
        Box Elder High School, it was apparent to the Visiting Team that teachers are
        concerned with making sure that their students are learning and that they bear a
        personal responsibility for their own education, as well. Further, the staff at Box
        Elder High School is aware of effective instructional strategies and corresponding
        activities that are aligned with the performance expectations and standards for
        students. Observed teaching strategies included direct instruction, cooperative
        learning, group work, problem solving, teacher demonstrations, modeling, student
        presentations, open discussion, previewing, visual aids, experiments, hands-on
        activities, laboratory exploration, technology-aided instruction, role-playing, and
        the use of manipulatives.

        While many teachers are extremely effective with some of these methods, the
        Visiting Team recommends that all teachers continue to explore the use of
        research-based "best practices" that will actively engage as many students as
        possible in learning.

b)   *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional*
        strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

        Although not every class was visited by the Visiting Team, in each of the classes
        observed teachers were using a variety of instructional strategies during
        instructional time. Since Box Elder High School has a five-period day with long
        class periods, the Visiting Team feels that it is important to use a variety of
        teaching strategies. Most teachers used multiple strategies in order to break up
        the time, some varying their strategies two or three times during the class period.
        Some teachers even gave their students an opportunity to choose from a selection
        of activities that would address various learning styles. It was obvious in many
        classrooms that teachers were consciously aware of the need to vary the activities
        and strategies to meet the needs of the individual students within the classroom.

        The staff is willing to make necessary accommodations to meet the needs of
        students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs). A trained teacher in
        sheltered teaching strategies also provides limited-English-speaking students with
        opportunities to succeed at Box Elder High School.

Regarding data-driven instructional strategies, the Visiting Team observed a need for better disaggregated student data. That data could then be used to adjust or modify instruction to remediate or improve student learning.

c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Teachers at Box Elder High School appear, from the Visiting Team's brief observations, to make a sincere and honest effort to provide ample opportunities for students who seek help or assistance in any way to succeed in their classes, if that is the students' desire. All visited teachers expressed a sincere willingness to help students before and/or after school with any academic concerns when students struggle with difficult concepts, assignments, homework, and other after-school curricular or extra-curricular activities.

The administration also appeared very concerned that every student who had the desire be provided ample opportunity to succeed and obtain a high school diploma. If a student chooses to drop out, it is only done after every possible avenue of success has been explained and explored.

Students who fail to meet Box Elder High School standards are provided with the opportunity to obtain a HS diploma at an alternative high school located nearby. The "Turnabout" program also appears to be a commendable and valuable asset in providing students with remediation and restitution.

"Study Buddies" is a program that the Visiting Team would commend as a program to continue and build upon as an effective peer assistance tool.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

In the classroom, the development of assessments of student learning is, in most cases, based on clear definition of the type of achievement to be assessed. However, in the assessment of student achievement with regard to the expectations regarding the DRSLs, the assessment is lacking schoolwide. The Visiting Team feels that each department and each individual teacher, administrator, and support staff member should feel committed to understanding and using the DRSLs that have been established for as a guiding light throughout the school.

b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

There is evidence of performance assessment in most classrooms, where the selection of the method of assessing student learning is based on the type of learning to be assessed, the specific performance standards for evaluating student achievement, and the purpose of the assessment. According to the school profile, there is an additional need for more methods of assessment, such as portfolios, journals, research projects, and interview assessment.

c)   *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

According to the school profile, the focus group feels there is a need to improve in the area of fairness among the different ethnic groups at the school. Although there isn't enough data to support the need, the focus group feels that there **is** a need, and their intent was to improve the inequality among these groups. In most cases, however, performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are clearly defined and applied on an equitable basis.

Leadership for School Improvement:

a)   *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The school has established an academic learning climate in which teaching and learning are supported. Most students and staff feel valued and important, although some recognition programs have not been regularly implemented. According the focus group reflection, the lack of direction and training in the early stages of the self-study process have affected teacher morale and increased apathy toward a consistent schoolwide emphasis on instructional goals.

b)   *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision-making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

The school is emerging in its understanding and skill at data-driven decision making. Although the current goals and action plans are not directly aligned with the school profile, as well as focus group and departmental work, the action steps include timelines and responsibilities for implementation. The means for evaluating the effectiveness of the school improvement plan are generally insufficient to adequately assess progress and effectiveness, because indicators and baseline data are not clearly defined.

The decision-making process is collaborative and aligns with the school's beliefs, mission, and goals. Leadership decisions affecting instruction are based on validated, research-based practices, as evidenced by the schoolwide study and implementation of "Community of Learning" for the past two years.

c)   *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school makes limited use of assessment and evaluation data for the purpose of improving student learning and instructional effectiveness. The school leadership expresses a sincere desire to learn to develop measurable DRSLs and utilize data to monitor the progress of current and proposed school improvement efforts.

d)   *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Schoolwide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission for quality teachers, effective instruction, and a positive learning environment. As evidenced in numerous faculty, support staff, and community member interviews, the school leadership has engendered a strong level of commitment and loyalty in Box Elder stakeholders. This appears to be largely a result of the effective stewardship and sincerity of the current school leadership.

e)   *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The decision-making process aligns with the school's beliefs, mission, and goals. As mentioned previously, the school leadership expresses an interest in learning to allocate resources and utilize schoolwide DRSLs and properly aligned improvement efforts.

f)   *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership works effectively with the School Community Council and business partnerships on issues such Trust Lands funding, Comprehensive Guidance Committee, and internship opportunities for students. Currently, the PTSA is not functioning at Box Elder High, but is on track with a president-elect for next year. Community involvement in the school improvement effort was lacking, aside from survey completion. The Visiting Team senses that the school community was not utilized in the accreditation process because of a lack of "buy-in" or understanding of the self-study process.

Community Building:

a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The Visiting Team recognizes the positive and productive relationships that exist among most students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. There is strong evidence that the school is creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. This is evidenced by the fact that many faculty and staff members are graduates of Box Elder High School. The Visiting Team also received numerous comments from the faculty and staff indicating that these groups have the highest respect for the administration and their vision for school improvement. The counselors created the Dream Team, which consists of 23 teachers who work with the students and parents on their SEOPs. The efforts of this team have increased parental involvement to 81 percent during the most recent SEOP conferences.

We encourage the focus groups to increase the emerging efforts to thoroughly analyze the data collected that will help provide direction for school improvement.

b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The school actively involves parents in the learning process through a variety of programs. Box Elder High School has developed a School Community Council that assisted in the development of the school's beliefs, mission, and action plan. There is outstanding support from local businesses and employers, as evidenced by their willingness to provide placements for over one-third of the senior class that participates in at least one hour of Internship or CO-OP each day.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Box Elder High School clearly has a commitment to professional development. The staff has been involved in a variety of staff development activities based on their own needs and desires. It is suggested that the entire staff identify the schoolwide needs for staff development, and that these efforts become more focused on the DRSLs. Once the staff understands the philosophy of the accreditation process, they will understand the importance of research-based

strategies. These strategies need to drive the school improvement plan throughout the curriculum.

It is recommended that the use of data-driven, research-based information be utilized to determine the direction of the school improvement process.

b)   *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

The administration works to develop a culture of collaboration and continuous improvement by supporting a monthly *Late Start* day on which the students come to school at 10:00, which allows for collaboration, planning time, and organization of the focus groups around common prep periods.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (NASCU) STANDARDS I-X

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

Box Elder High School's library has an outdated collection.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

Box Elder High School has personnel who are underqualified with eligibility requests.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a)   *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

School Improvement Team members described the selection of the school action plans as being prior to and independent of the school profile data, department, and focus group work. Because the alignment was not evident, the school is not certain that the action plan addresses the critical needs of the school.

The Visiting Team feels that Box Elder High should work to effectively use the profile, and the department and focus group work, to develop a reasonable and effective action plan to address areas of critical need.

b)   *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The action plans resulted from two days of collaboration and brainstorming by the faculty and staff during the early stages of the self-study, followed by approval and input from the School Community Council. The school stakeholders generally communicated ownership and commitment to the schoolwide action plans. However, because reading and writing are emphasized, some teachers have commented that they do not feel the reading comprehension and writing skills relate to their content area. Because the backward sequencing lacks the utilization of data for determining need and tracking improved student achievement, the Visiting Team is concerned about the capacity of the school for long-term commitment and sustained effort in the current action plans.

c)   *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The school has effectively assigned timelines and responsibilities to the action plans. The school leadership also intends to further examine the now-available school profile to determine additional action plans and put an assessment process in place to define and realize school success. The school stakeholders are anxious to celebrate student improvement by monitoring and adjusting the schoolwide action plan. The school needs to identify what success will look like when it gets there, and benchmarks for tracking performance.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Box Elder High School community members have invested themselves in a genuine effort to prepare an impressive report based on the USOE "Collaborating for Student Achievement" model. Stakeholders have warmly received the Visiting Team and been honest, open, and patient with its question and observation process. The Visiting Team is encouraged by the willingness of the administration and the majority of the faculty to learn more about the process and future steps to progress toward proper sequencing of the self-study process and implementation of research-based best practices.

- A high level of collaboration among stakeholders was involved in the development of the school mission and belief statements. It was very evident that students feel Box Elder High School's greatest resources are quality teachers. These powerful educators are working to continuously strengthen and improve curriculum delivery methods. A desire to work toward school improvement is very strong among the majority of school stakeholders.

- The school climate is enhanced not only by a well-maintained building that invites positive student participation, but also by a wealth of heritage and positive community support.

Recommendations:

- Box Elder High School should continue to familiarize itself with the "Collaborating for Student Achievement" model to refine and direct an ongoing self-study by:

- Collecting meaningful data, disaggregating (identifying subgroups of students that may be left behind) and facilitating a departmental and organizational re-analysis to further identify areas of strength and improvement as related directly to student learning.
- Aligning the action plan to address findings from the above analyses, seeking the collaboration and consensus of the entire school community.

- The school should continue to address assessment for all students at classroom levels by asking:

  - Is the assessment authentic?
  - Are the grades students receive aligned with instruction and desired outcomes?
  - Are the assessment results used to inform and guide instruction? Is reflection occurring after assessment?
  - Do students understand assessment and the criteria involved?
  - Are the assessments in line with department, school, district, and state DRSLs?

- The school should further develop its understanding and utilization of schoolwide DRSLs by identifying indicators and methods for schoolwide assessment. Clearly defining school success and working toward benchmarks of achievement will provide opportunities for staff development, accountability, and celebration.